

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, EMERGING THREATS,
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Statement of Rep. Christopher Shays
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We fight abroad to be safe at home. Successful military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrate an unmatched capacity, and newfound willingness, to confront emerging threats where they nest, before they can migrate to our shores. But the battle lines in the global war against terrorism reach from Kabul to Cleveland, from Baghdad to Bridgeport. The threat demands a new military posture on the home front as well.

Today we examine efforts to reform and restructure Department of Defense (DOD) capabilities to defend the U.S. homeland and support civil authorities in the event of terrorist attacks.

The Cold War strategic pillars of containment, deterrence, reaction and mutually assured destruction crumbled on September 11th 2001. Since then, we have been building a new security paradigm, a strategy that is proactive, preventive and when necessary preemptive. Significant strides have been made to reshape and refocus military capabilities to meet an uncertain world of lethal intentions and unconventional capabilities overseas. But at home, less has been accomplished to clarify the structural, legal and fiscal implications of new military operations within the sovereign borders of the states.

New strategic realities prompted the creation of the Northern Command, or NORTHCOM, to unify all DOD homeland defense activities under one military authority. And the position of Assistant Secretary for Homeland Defense was created to coordinate all DOD civil support functions. These are important steps toward aligning Pentagon management with current missions.

But below those top-level structures, particularly in the National Guard and Reserve units trained in security operations, there has been little change in what many view as an accelerating, unsustainable tempo of domestic taskings and foreign deployments. Personnel and equipment used for homeland defense missions are not available for war fighting tasks. Reserve and Guard call-ups draw heavily from local first responder ranks, degrading domestic readiness. This apparent conflict between global security and homeland defense responsibilities strains a “Total Force” structure heavily reliant on seamless integration of reserve component and active duty units.

The threat of terrorism demands new tactics abroad and new modes of military vigilance at home. Missions and skills that were scattered and secondary considerations in the Cold War strategy must now be as manned and ready as global force projection packages. To “train as they fight” military units have to practice on our streets along side civilian first responders. Equipment interoperability standards and communications channels have to be established before the next attack is upon us.

So today we ask how military force structures, doctrine and training are being transformed to integrate homeland defense and civil support missions into a unified, sustainable defense posture. Our witnesses all bring impressive experience and important insights to our discussion today. We appreciate their time and we look forward to their testimony.